

Making the GBG Act, 2024 work for Bengaluru

The GBG Act, 2024 offers a transformative possibility but not in its current avatar. Only specific, immediate actions by the Government of Karnataka and further amendments to the Act itself can make a tangible difference to citizens' life. Janaagraha offers a roadmap to make the GBG Act, 2024 work for Bengaluru.

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A. Immediate actions for the Government of Karnataka

1st September 20251st November 202531st March 2026

Establish City Corporations

Complete ward delimitation and reservation process

Conduct elections for City Corporations

Provision

Based on factors such as population, density, revenue, etc., the **State to establish not more than seven City Corporations** to govern Greater Bengaluru Area (Section 5)

The State to constitute a **delimitation commission** as may be prescribed, to recommend the division of wards (Section 29)

A **general election** to be held for the purpose of constitution of a new City Corporation (Section 34)

Action

- Publish the consolidated **objections with actions on the draft notification published on 19th July 2025** for division of City Corporations by **26th August 2025**
- Publish **the final notification by 1st September 2025** for establishment of City Corporations

- Constitute the Delimitation Commission by **3rd September 2025 as provided by the Supreme Court**
- Publish final notification of **delimitation and ward reservation** by **1st November 2025**

- Prepare the **electoral roll** by **31st January 2026**
- Conduct **elections** to all City Corporations by **31st March 2026**

B. Provisions that need definite timelines in the Act

Janaagraha identified **4 crucial provisions** which do not have any timelines attached to them and therefore GoK needs to explicitly notify timelines for those -

01

Audit of **annual accounts** of the GBA (Section 11(g))
- Within **four months of the end of the financial year**

02

Review and sanction of schedule of officers and servants of the GBA (Section 11(g))
- Within **three months** of the submission by the GBA

03

Notification of the **common cadre and recruitment** rules (Section 14(1))
- **Within six months of Act** and **revision every five years.**

04

Formation of **Bangalore Metropolitan Planning Committee** (Section 14(2))
- Within **six months of the Act**

C. Provisions that require rules to be notified in a timebound manner

Janaagraha has identified **12 provisions** that require the Government to notify rules, with due public consultation, **within six months of the Act's commencement** to ensure timely and robust implementation. The provisions are:

Urban Planning and Design

- 01 Constitution and function of **Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee** (Section 14(2))

Urban Capacities and Resources

- 02 **Account keeping** in the GBA and City Corporations (Section 24 and 196)
- 03 Preparation of **annual budget** of the GBA and City Corporations (Section 21 and 181)
- 04 Preparation of **annual report** of the GBA (Section 22)
- 05 Formulation of **Borrowing Policy** for the GBA (Section 23)
- 06 Preparation of **Medium-Term Fiscal Plan** for City Corporations (Section 187)

C. Provisions that require rules to be notified in a timebound manner

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation

- 07 Procedure to **elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor** from among the councillors. (Section 77)
- 08 **Proceedings** of the City Corporation with meetings **at least six times** for full working days in each financial quarter. (Section 114)
- 09 Conduct of business of **standing committees** for monthly meetings. (Section 114)

Transparency, Accountability and Participation

- 10 Procedure of **nomination of ward committee** members by a **Selection Committee** made up of residents of the Corporation with experience in civic/social work. (Section 101)
- 11 **Conduct of business** at the Ward Committee meetings with a **fixed day** and **place** for the **monthly** meetings (Section 102)
- 12 Preparation of the Ward Committee budget **with citizen participation** by providing **four weeks** to consolidate suggestions (Section 103)

D. Provisions that need further amendment

Janaagraha identified **24 provisions** that require the Government to amend the Act **in a phased manner, in order to make the GBA Act work meaningfully for Bengaluru and Bengalureans.**

Urban Planning and Design

- 01 Empower Ward Committees to prepare a **five-year ward vision plan** in consultation with the citizens.
- 02 Empower City Corporations to prepare **five-year development plans** considering all the Ward vision plans submitted by the Ward Committees.
- 03 Strengthen **public participation** with consultations and public scrutiny through **ward committees and Area Sabhas** at all levels during the **plan preparation process.**

D. Provisions that need further amendment

Urban Capacities and Resources

- 04 Allocate **25% of the budget** of all City Corporations to Ward Committees.
- 05 Provide **lateral entry** for roles lower than municipal commissioner.
- 06 Mandate **certification-based skilling** for city officials.

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation

- 07 Provide for a **metropolitan mayor** for the Greater Bengaluru Area.
- 08 Establish a **Mayor-in-Council system** for each City Corporation, comprising of the Mayor and ten other elected members, vested with executive powers and serving a full 5-year term.
- 09 Mandate the **Mayor's removal** by a **one-third vote** of the Corporation members, after completing one year in office. Ensure simultaneous vote to elect a new Mayor.

D. Provisions that need further amendment

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation

- 10 Prohibit an elected councillor holding **simultaneous elected offices** from voting, until he/she gives up his/her membership as a MLA/MLC/MP.
- 11 Mandate for a **systematic councillor leadership development programme** with a focus on women and first-time councillors.
- 12 Ensure **disclosure of interests** by mayors and councilors (in public works and contracts taken up by their immediate family).
- 13 Empower the **State Election Commission** over delimitation of wards and reservations to be undertaken once in every 10 years.
- 14 Mandate the **first meeting of the City Corporations** to be conducted under the supervision of the **State Election Commission within 30 days** of election results.
- 15 Mandate **notification of zones** and **areas** to be **undertaken by respective City Corporations**.

D. Provisions that need further amendment

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation

- 16 Empower City Corporations to have **power over appointment, initiation of disciplinary action and termination of all municipal staff** including the Municipal Commissioner.
- 17 Mandate the **Municipal Commissioners** to be **appointed in consultation with** and shall function under the **guidance of the Mayors-in-Council**; Municipal Commissioners' **Annual Confidential Report** to be **done by the Mayor**.
- 18 Mandate that the **City Corporations have power to approve their budgets** without State Government's power to modify

D. Provisions that need further amendment

Transparency, Accountability and Participation

- 19 Mandate the **disclosure** of quarterly and annual audited financial statements, particulars of major works, service level benchmarks, and details of plans, income, and budget **in line with BBMP FRBM Rules, 2021**
- 20 Mandate City Corporations to have a **digital governance policy** covering civic technology, open data standards, open Application Programme Interfaces (APIs), and Public Disclosure in machine-readable formats.
- 21 Provide for **Greater Bengaluru Services Ombudsman** for citizen grievance redressal including service-related issues, mal-administration and corruption.
- 22 Mandate **internal audits** to have a check on internal controls and processes.
- 23 Mandate the **formation of Area Sabhas** to serve as platforms for **neighbourhood level participation**.
- 24 Mandate all **City Corporation and Ward Committee** meetings to be **livestreamed**.

City-Systems Assessment

Recap

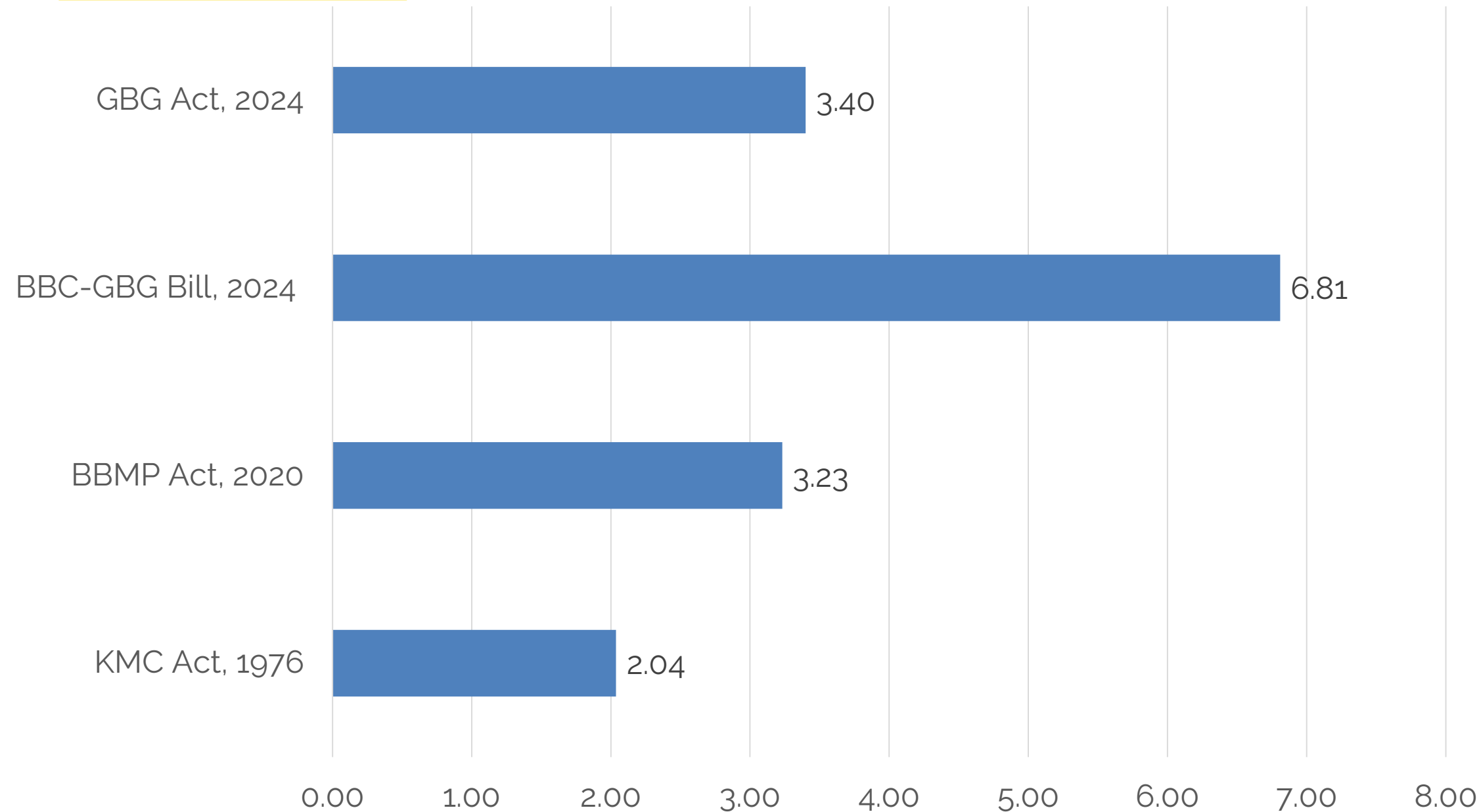
- The Government of Karnataka introduced the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024 (GBG Bill) in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on July 23, 2024.
- In August 2024, Janaagraha undertook a comparative study of the then tabled GBG Bill with the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024 (as recommended by the BBC), the BBMP Act, 2020 and the KMC Act, 1976.
 - The **GBG Bill scored poorly across all four city-systems components** including - urban planning and design, urban capacities and resources, empowered and legitimate political representation, and transparency, accountability, and civic participation.
 - Overall, the GBG Bill **scored** a dismal **3.35 out of 10**.

The study revealed that the **GBG Bill is less than half as effective** as the Bill drafted by the BBC.

Further, we have undertaken an assessment of the GBG Act, 2024 passed on March 10, 2025 in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. Our study shows that the Act is still only marginally better than the BBMP Act, 2020 it aims to replace.

City-Systems Assessment

Overall score

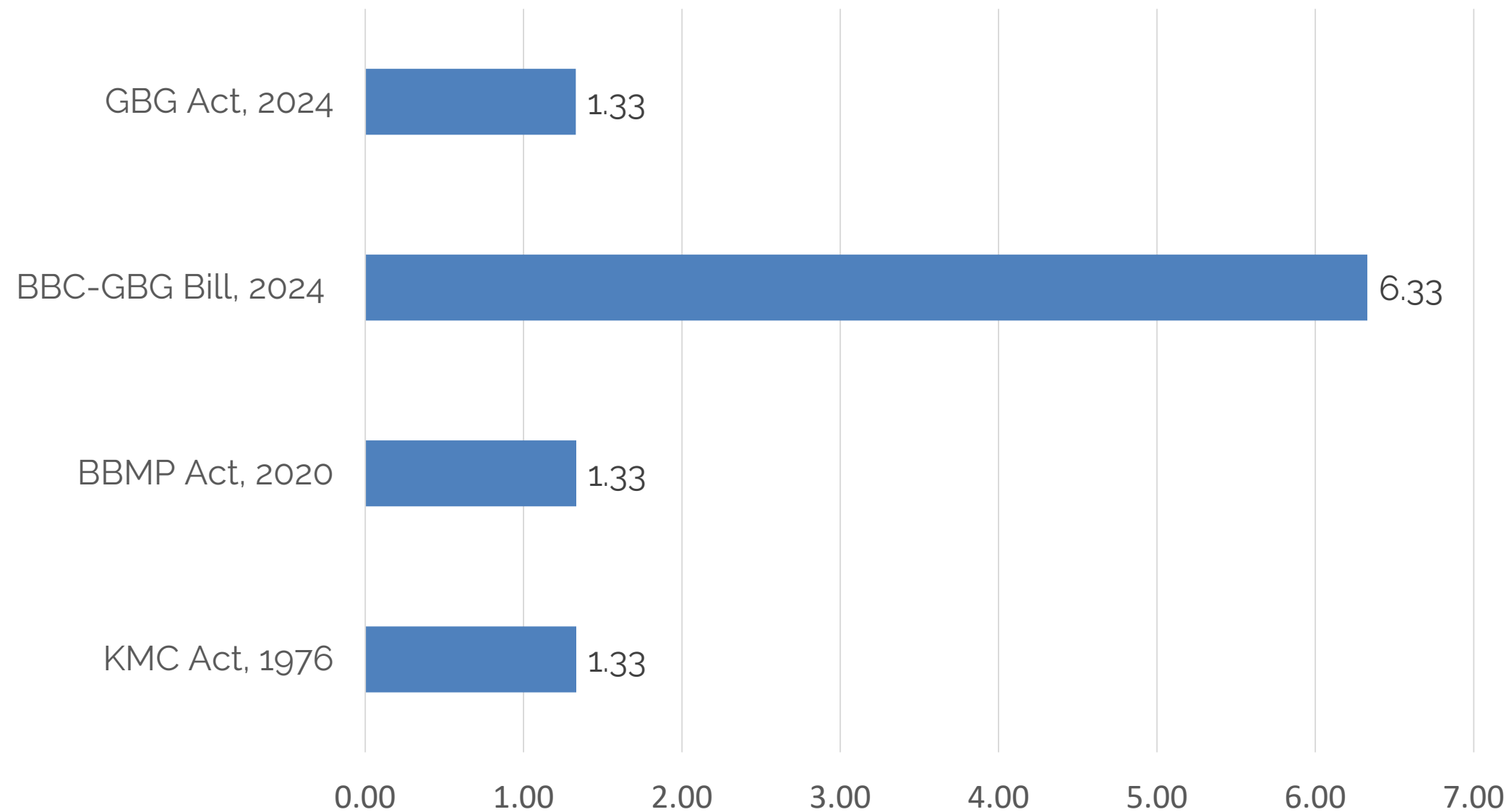


At **3.40**
overall, the GBG Act,
2024 is still only half as
effective as the BBC-
GBG Bill, 2024 due to
provisions leading to
weak planning,
disempowered City
Corporations and lack of
citizen participation

Only those legislative provisions and rules that applied to Bengaluru have been considered while assessing KMC Act, 1976.

City-Systems Assessment

Urban Planning and Design



Only municipal legislations have been used to score questions on 'Urban Planning and Design'. For example: the mandate for three-tiered planning, and the mandate for citizen participation in planning. Details specific to the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 have not been included in this assessment..

Weak

provisions for planning
in the GBG Act, 2024

While the GBG Act mandates the Greater Bengaluru Authority to undertake integrated planning for the Greater Bengaluru Area, it fails to mandate -

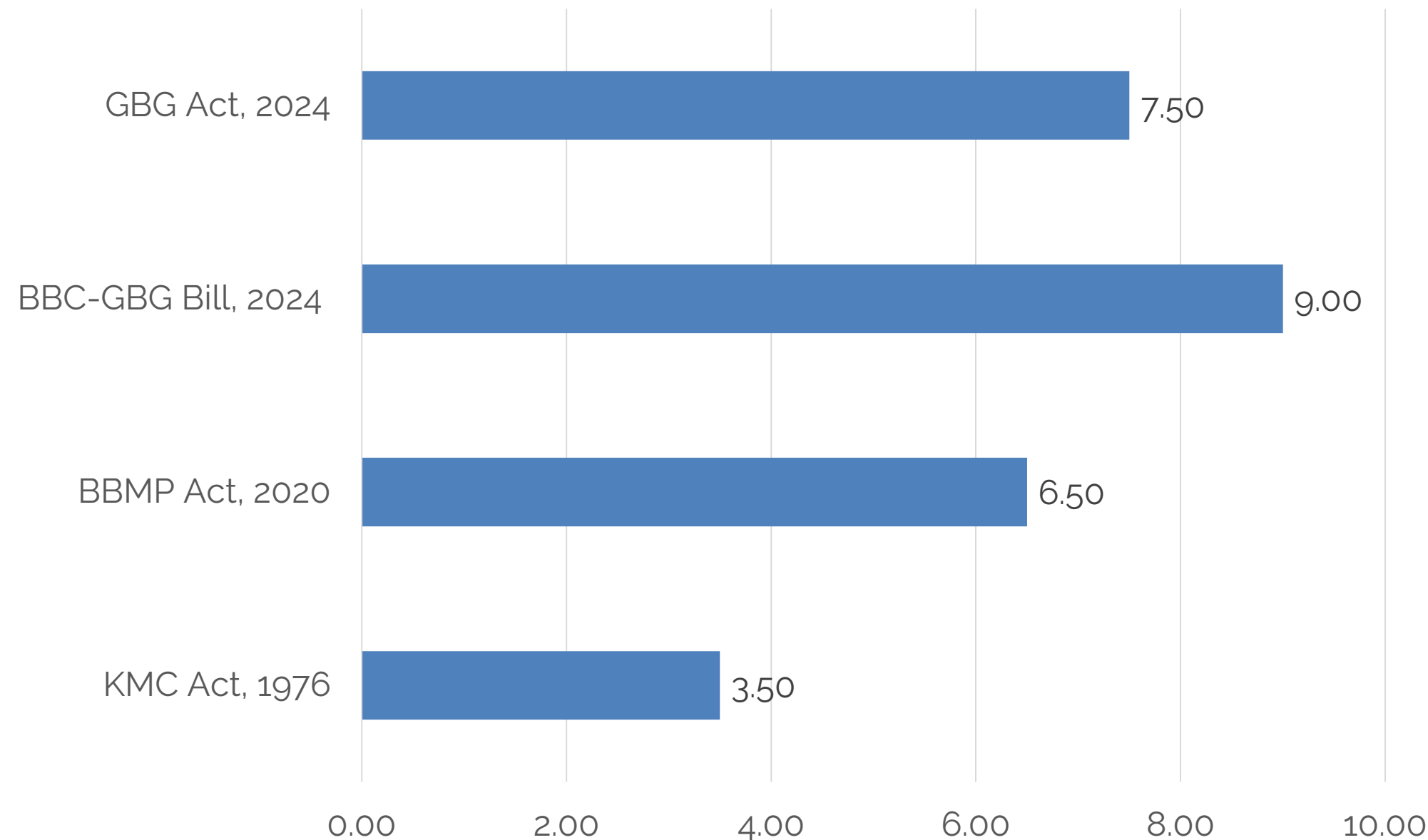
- Planning at the municipal and ward level with a decentralised approval process
- Public participation in plan preparation at the metropolitan, municipal and ward level

City-Systems Assessment

7.50

With a score of the Act has relatively strong provisions on finance and HR but can be further strengthened

Urban Capacities and Resources



The Karnataka Local Fund Authorities Fiscal Responsibility Act (KLFAFRA), 2003 has been considered when scoring the KMC Act on MTFP. The Karnataka Municipal Accounting and Budgeting Rules (KMABR), 2006 has not been considered when scoring on provisions on the double entry accounting system as it was not applicable to Bengaluru.

The GBG Act:

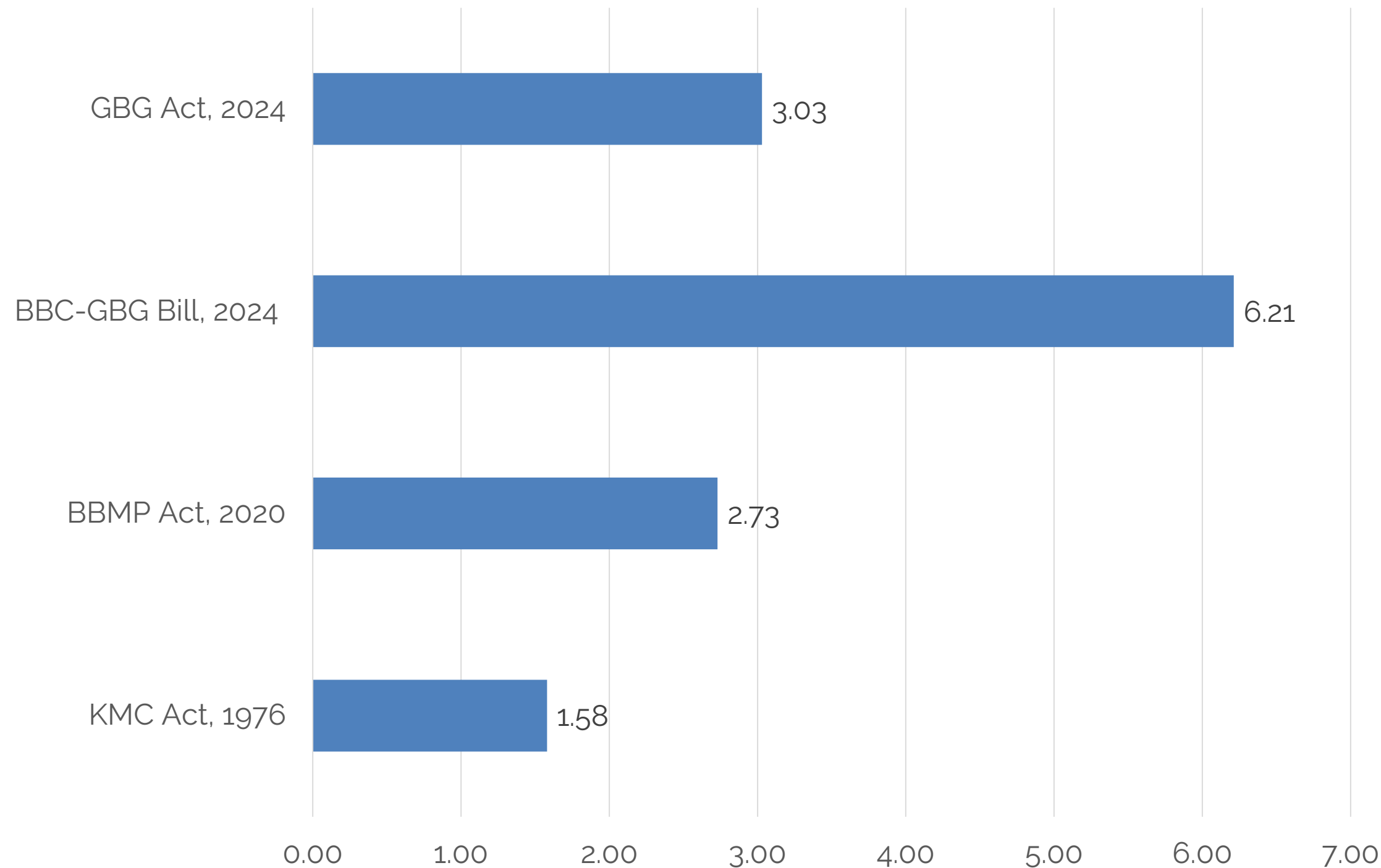
- Devolves all key taxes
- Empowers over borrowings
- Mandates a Medium Term Fiscal Plan
- Independent audit of accounts
- Double-entry accounting
- Municipal cadre

However, no mandate for:

- Training for city officials
- Performance management system ('may' provision)

City-Systems Assessment

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation



With a score of **3.03**
the GBG Act does not go far
enough on empowering mayors
and councils

The GBG Act provides for:

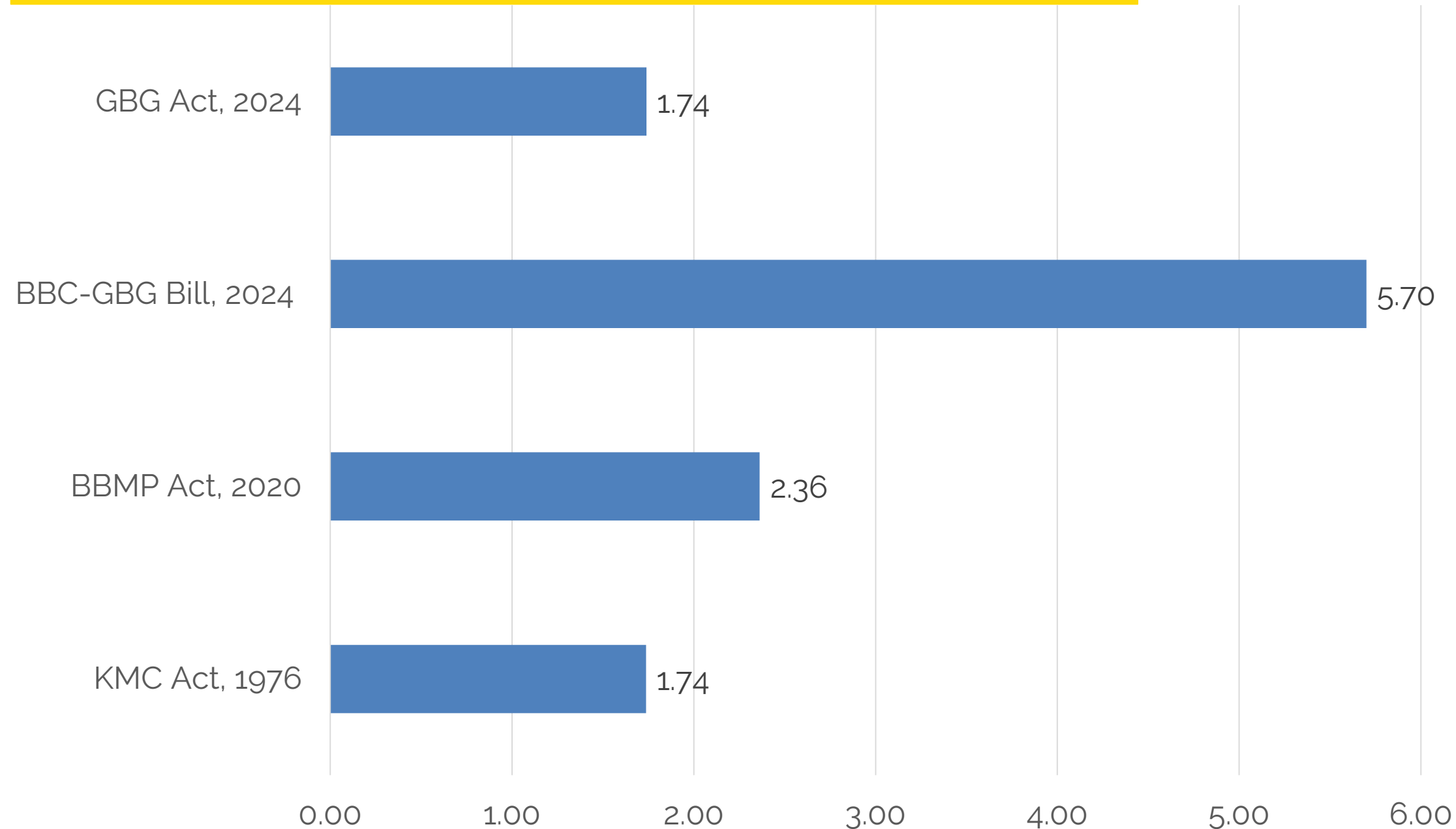
- Devolution of all 18 functions as per the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution
- Power over appointment and disciplinary action against Grade C and D employees

However, it does not:

- Empower SEC over delimitation of wards
- Mandate a five-year mayoral tenure
- Empower city corporations over budgets
- Mandate training for mayors/councilors
- Mandate disclosure of interests

City-Systems Assessment

Transparency, Accountability and Participation



Provisions of the Karnataka Right to Information (Disclosure of Information by Authorities Providing Municipal Services) Rule, 2009 framed under the RTI Act, 2005, have been applied to all four legislations/ Bills to score civic data disclosure.

At **1.74**
the GBG Act is likely to
worsen participation and
transparency.

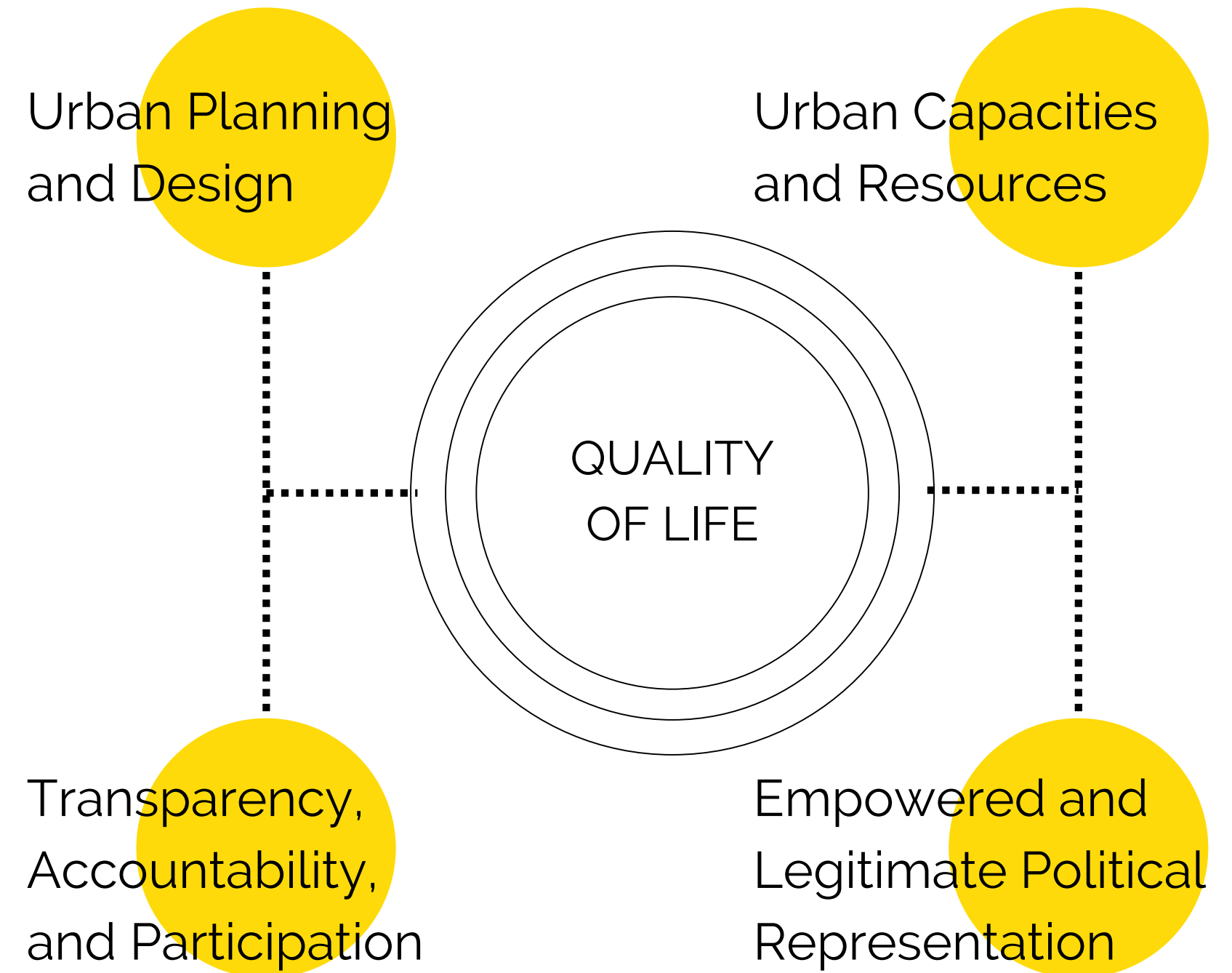
The GBG Act does not mandate:

- Creation of Area Sabhas
- Comprehensive civic data disclosure
- Ombudsman for service-related issues and corruption
- Internal audit
- Digital governance policy

The City-Systems Framework

Quality of life in our cities and towns is determined by the quality of laws, policies, institutions, and institutional processes we call 'city-systems'.

By strengthening city-systems, we address the root causes of the recurrent challenges facing our cities.



City-Systems are the root causes underlying quality of life in cities.

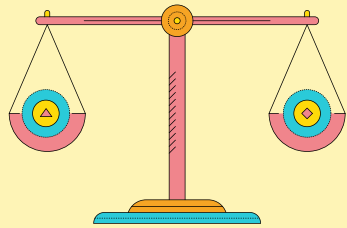
Janaagraha's Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS)

What is ASICS?

Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) evaluates the quality of governance in cities by assessing the quality of laws, policies, institutions, and institutional processes that together help govern them.



Methodology



A comparative analysis undertaken of:

Greater Bengaluru Governance (GBG) Act, 2024 as notified on 24th April 2025

Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024 proposed by the Brand Bengaluru Committee (BBC-GBG Bill)

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Act, 2020

Karnataka Municipal Corporations (KMC) Act, 1976



33 questions analysed:

Urban Planning and Design*
5 questions

Urban Capacities and Resources
10 questions

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation
10 questions

Transparency, Accountability, and Participation
8 questions



Scored on a scale of 0 to 10:

The municipal legislations/bills were scored on a scale of 0 to 10; the higher the score, the better the performance.

* Only municipal legislations have been used to score questions on 'Urban Planning and Design'. For Ex. Mandate for three-tiered planning, mandate for citizen participation in planning. Details that are specific to the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 are not included in this assessment.

Assessment Criteria

- 01 Urban Planning and Design
- 02 Urban Capacities and Resources
- 03 Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation
- 04 Transparency, Accountability and Participation

Assessment Criteria - Urban Planning and Design

- 01 Does the law require 3 levels of Spatial Development Plans (SDPs): Metropolitan, municipal and ward(s)
a. Metropolitan SDP | b. Municipal SDP | c. Ward SDP
- 02 Does the law mandate participation of all parastatals/agencies /city governments in creation of SDPs (metro/municipal/ward)?
- 03 Is there a clear decentralised procedure for approvals of each level of plans?
 - a. Does the law mandate that the metropolitan SDP be approved by the state government?
 - b. Does the law mandate that the municipal SDP be approved by the MPC/metropolitan authority?
 - c. Does the law mandate that the ward SDP be approved by the city government?
- 04 Does the law mandate public participation in the preparation of each level of plan (metropolitan, municipal and ward) through area sabhas/ward committees and other means?
- 05 Does the law mandate public scrutiny at (including objections and responses) each levels of plan (metropolitan, municipal and ward) through area sabhas / ward committees and other means?

Assessment Criteria - Urban Capacities and Resources

- 06 Is the city government empowered to set and collect the following taxes?
a. Property tax | b. Entertainment tax | c. Profession tax | d. Advertisement tax/fee
- 07 Is the city government authorised to raise borrowings without state government approval?
- 08 Is the city government authorised to make investments or otherwise apply surplus funds without state government approval?
- 09 Is the city government required by law to have a long-term and/or medium-term fiscal plan?
- 10 Are the annual accounts of the city government mandated to be audited by an independent/external agency?
- 11 Is the city government mandated to follow a double-entry accounting system?
- 12 Does the law mandate a minimum tenure of 2 years for the municipal commissioner?
- 13 Are the city government officials mandated to undergo induction and periodic training?
- 14 Does the law mandate to establish a performance management system?
- 15 Does the city government have access to a municipal cadre for its staffing?

Assessment Criteria - Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation

- 16 Do city governments have the following powers with respect to its employees?
a. Appointment | b. Disciplinary Action | c. Termination
- 17 Does the mayor of the city government have a five-year term?
- 18 Is the mayor directly elected?
- 19 Does the mayor/council have the authority to appoint the municipal commissioner?
- 20 Is the mayor ex-officio member of the metropolitan authority?
- 21 Is the city government responsible for providing all functions and services it is mandated to as per the 74th CAA?
- 22 Does the council have the final say in approving the city budget?
- 23 Are locally elected officials mandated to undergo training?
- 24 Is the State Election Commission (SEC) empowered to conduct delimitation of wards?
- 25 Are locally elected officials required to publicly disclose their income and assets, and their interests (in public works and contracts taken up by their immediate family)?

Assessment Criteria - Transparency, Accountability and Participation

- 26 Has the state government mandated city governments to publish key civic data in line with the model Public Disclosure Law (PDL) with respect to:
a. Audited financial statement on quarterly basis | b. Audited financial statement on annual basis | c. Service level benchmarks | d. Particulars of major works | e. Details of plans, income and budget | f. Minutes of its meetings
- 27 Has the state government enacted the Community Participation Law (CPL)?
- 28 Are the city governments mandated to have a participatory budgeting process in place?
- 29 Are the city governments mandated to carry out an internal audit (audit of process/internal controls) within a predetermined frequency, at least annual? Are the city governments mandated to publish internal audit report in the public domain?
- 30 Are the city governments mandated to have a digital governance policy/ roadmap?
- 31 Are the city governments mandated to have a citizen charter with: providing for target levels of services, timelines for delivery of services and protocols for obtaining relief where service levels are not met?
a. Target level of service | b. Timelines for delivery of service | c. Protocols for obtaining relief, where service levels are not met
- 32 Does the state provide for the constitution of an ombudsman for the city governments to cater to service-related issues as well as corruption?
- 33 Is the Ombudsman authorised to:
a. Resolve inter-agency disputes? | b. Investigate corruption suo motu?

About Janaagraha

Janaagraha is a Bengaluru-based not-for-profit institution working to transform the quality of life in India's cities and towns. It defines quality of life as comprising quality of infrastructure and services, and quality of citizenship. To achieve its mission, Janaagraha works with councillors and citizens to catalyse active citizenship in city neighbourhoods, and with governments to institute reforms to city-systems. Janaagraha has worked extensively on urban policy and governance reforms for over two decades, including on JnNURM, and with the XIII, XIV, XV Finance Commissions, and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Janaagraha's current portfolio of work includes engagements with the XVI Finance Commission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, NITI Aayog, Capacity Building Commission, state governments of Odisha, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh, and the 5th State Finance Commission of Karnataka.

Find out more at www.janaagraha.org



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